

Supply

There is also a big question mark surrounding the Tory Government's continued funding of regional development in the rest of Canada. The last Budget clearly indicated that federal spending on regional development will drop to \$1 billion a year over the next five years, from a peak of \$1.4 billion in the present fiscal year. It just happened that this was an election year.

The Tory agenda is quite clear. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) is treating regional development like a yo-yo; the final spending is anybody's guess. All this uncertainty is especially troubling and will likely have very serious repercussions for Atlantic Canada.

The Government is slashing funds for economic development in the Atlantic Canada area—the country's poorest region—in an attempt to help it reduce its budgetary deficit. The Atlantic region should not have to bear the brunt of the Government's spending cuts.

Last April the Council of Maritime Premiers convened to discuss federal-provincial resource development agreements. During this meeting, the Premier of my home province of New Brunswick, the Hon. Frank McKenna stated that if the money were to expire, employees whose jobs are directly dependent on the agreements quite simply will be out of work. The province is obviously not in a financial position to carry its share of the burden as well as the federal Government's share.

Indirectly, hundreds and perhaps even thousands of people who work in reforestation, build fishing boats, and who work on mineral exploration projects, and who perform all the tasks connected with the delivery of resource agreements, will lose their jobs if the federal Government does not commit itself to a sensible development program.

Regional development agreements have been a valuable tool in helping key areas of the Atlantic economy which have potential to lift the region out of economic disparity. The Government must cease its Draconian treatment of Atlantic Canada, and provide the area with the resources that it needs to achieve its full potential.

Another area of the Atlantic economy which has been ravaged by the Tory Government is passenger rail service. The slashing of VIA Rail funding is a clear

indication that the Government has turned its back on the people of Atlantic Canada.

Sir John A. Macdonald had a national dream. If he could only see what the Party he once led has done to his dream, he would surely roll over in his grave.

The gradual shutting down of Atlantic Canada's transportation infrastructure is an obvious attempt to isolate the region, and virtually ensures that economic disparity will be one of its permanent features.

The dream of a modern and efficient inter-city rail service in Atlantic Canada is gone, probably forever, because of the Government's recklessness. If VIA Rail is shut down, the Tories will have to answer for this hasty action. Atlantic Canadians want VIA Rail retained and expanded. Last year, VIA's Atlantic branch carried more than 230,000 passengers. In the first three months of this year there is a 10 per cent increase in the number of people using the railway.

Without VIA Rail, Atlantic Canada will become more isolated, jobs will disappear, and inadequate highway systems will suffer more wear and tear. The Tory Party will forever be remembered as the Party which shut down Atlantic Canada.

Atlantic Canada's fisheries are in serious trouble because of the Government's ineptitude. Foreign ships are pillaging Canadian fish stocks with the blessing of the federal Government. The simple truth is that the Government has no policy to deal with foreign overfishing. People have lost jobs, and more may yet lose their jobs because of fisheries troubles.

The drop in cod stocks off Atlantic Canada's coast, confirmed by a recent scientific study, has forced a reduction in fishing quotas. The result has been the closing of fish plants in both Newfoundland and Nova Scotia.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) urged Spanish Prime Minister, Felipe Gonzalez, to reduce his country's overfishing of cod stocks outside Canada's 320 kilometre limit. It is high time the Prime Minister started telling the Spanish Prime Minister and leaders of the European Community countries to stop overfishing our waters. Since 1986, the federal Government has permitted member nations of the European Economic Community to overfish Canadian waters. When Spain and Portugal joined the European Community, the European Communities Council of Fisheries Ministers